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Five Days Now

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Five Days Now

Five days now, I've been sick
Never feeling worse or better.
I cannot make myself rest
Or stay indoors on these cold nights.
Last night I walked across a football field
With the full moon spilling onto the frosted ground.
Stubbled grass crunched beneath my feet
And off in some darker distance a radio beacon pulsed.
Beside the field was a silent highway
With a dead raccoon on its shoulder.
It could have been sleeping, lulled perhaps
By the earlier hum of traffic.
Crows had not yet found the black eyes
That still gleamed in the moonlight.
I looked off over the flat dark
Seeing my sour breath before me
Feeling my fever throb in my ears and face.
My grandmother, lost to me through senility
Sits in a chair miles and miles away
And I know I will never see her again.
Her home had always been a hard place to visit.
Time was so obviously a machine there,
Layering her things in a musty exhaust.
My father, her son, says he does not fear death.
He says it is dying we are afraid of,
But in death there is no memory.
I kneel down and with my sweating hand
I stroke the dead raccoon
And feel us stranded together on this road
Somewhere between the lights of town
And a wall of darkness.
But whatever there is to be shared between us
Is really only some small poignancy of touch.
The fur is deeply soft and cold and I think
Perhaps it is only stunned by life.
That somehow the animal guessed its self,
Saw its paths, the scope of its journeys,
And was overcome with a fatigue
Leaving it just enough energy
To shamle onto this shoulder and quietly give
To the relentless movement of the road.

Peter Fadness